

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended. The amendments to claim 1 are based on entry of the January 17, 2006 filed Amendment After Final Rejection. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Gregory at the interview held January 25, 2006, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration as the amendments only improve the clarity of claim language as suggested by the Examiner during the January 25 personal interview; (c) satisfy a requirement of form requested during the January 25 personal interview; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because the amendments were suggested by the Examiner during the interview. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The January 31 Advisory Action states that the amendment made in the January 17 Amendment After Final Rejection raised new issues that would require further consideration and/or search and indicates that the amendment will not be entered for the proposes of appeal. Applicants respectfully disagree and assert that the only amendment made to claim 1 in the January 17 Amendment After Final Rejection was for merely improving the clarity in response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph raised in the October 17, 2005 Final

Rejection. Thus, it does not raise new issues. The amendment by the January 17 Amendment After Final Rejection is included in the Supplemental Amendment After Final Rejection.

Moreover, the amendments made by this Supplemental Amendment After Final Rejection were fully discussed and agreed to during the January 25 personal interview to eliminate possible ambiguity. Therefore, because the amendments are merely for clarification purposes, Applicants believe that the amendments do not raise new issues.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of all amendments.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 1-5. Because the §112 rejection is overcome as discussed below, Applicants respectfully understand that claims 1-5 are allowed.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. As discussed during the interview, claim 1 is amended to improve the clarity, as suggested by the Examiner during the personal interview. During the interview, the Examiner agreed that the amendment overcomes this rejection. Applicants respectfully submit that this amendment does not change the scope of the claim. Therefore, the amendments are non-narrowing and do not affect the patentability of claim 1. Claims 2-5 depend from claim 1. As such, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

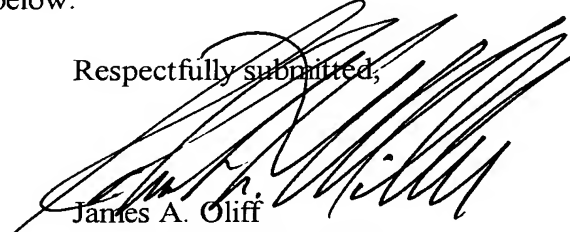
The Office Action rejects claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,630,226 to Tanaka; EPO Patent Publication No. 0142733 A2 to Takeuchi; GB 2262341 A to Jones, or FR 2692363 A1 to Lechevin. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the interview and argued in Applicants' January 17 Amendment After Final Rejection, none of the applied art teaches or suggests the features recited in claim 6. Accordingly, claim 6 is patentably distinct from the applied art. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-6 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:KXH/axl

Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

Date: February 8, 2006

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